

VZCZCXRO8947  
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSL  
DE RUEHRL #1157 2611051  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 181051Z SEP 09  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5235  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/COMUSNAVEUR NAPLES IT IMMEDIATE  
RUEHNO/USDELMC BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BERLIN 001157

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

OSD FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VERSHBOW  
STATE FOR EUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY GORDON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2019  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [XG](#) [GM](#)  
SUBJECT: FURTHER MISSION GERMANY VIEWS ON PLANNED U.S.  
FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE

REF: BERLIN 935

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PHILIP MURPHY. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (S/NF) I understand that there will be a Deputies' meeting in Washington on September 18 to discuss the future of the U.S. military force structure in Europe. Since the U.S. European Command as well as the bulk of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) and U.S. Air Forces Europe (USAFE) are located in Germany, I want to emphasize that I completely support the recommendation of my predecessor (reftel) that careful reconsideration needs to be given to plans to continue the draw-down of U.S. forces in Europe. The planned withdrawal from Germany of two of the three remaining U.S. Army brigade combat teams plus a squadron of U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft will significantly shrink the U.S. military footprint in Germany, which is already just a fraction of its size during the Cold War.

¶2. (S/NF) In addition to the negative impact that such a reduction will have on the ability of the U.S. military to do theater security cooperation activities with Germany as well as other NATO Allies and Partners, I fear it could also significantly undermine the unique and special relationship we have built and sustained with Germany over the last 60 years. We have already begun to feel the effects of our much reduced military presence since the end of the Cold War. Among the younger generation of Germans, who have much fewer opportunities to meet and have personal connections with Americans, there is already a tendency to put a lower priority on the Transatlantic relationship and to view it as less relevant than other institutions -- particularly the EU -- in addressing 21st Century security challenges.

¶3. (S/NF) We should not underestimate the importance of the personal, social and cultural ties that our military presence in Germany fosters between our two countries. These kinds of relationships cannot be built and sustained from afar. While it is impossible to quantify how much of a presence is enough, I would agree that we are already near the minimum, especially in view of the fact that a third to half of the U.S. forces stationed in Germany are deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq or elsewhere outside of Europe at any given time.

¶4. (S/NF) Finally, it is important to note that the German government not only strongly supports the maintenance of a robust U.S. troop presence, but, in fact, expects this from us. MOD State Secretary Wichert recently told us that

Germany would not want to become simply a hub for U.S. forces transiting to other places. He stressed that the permanent U.S. troop presence was important in showing a commitment to our partnership. Defense Minister Jung explicitly confirmed this in my introductory call with him last week. German political support for the our troop presence will not change, no matter which government coalition emerges from the September 27 Bundestag election. There is currently a strong political consensus in favor of the stationing of U.S. forces in Germany, which gives us unparalleled stationing rights and privileges as well as the ability to project force throughout Eurasia and into the Middle East. But in going forward, we need to be careful about taking any moves that makes it seem like we take this very special relationship for granted.

Murphy